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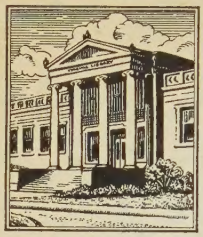

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SENECA AND KANT

SENECA AND KANT

OR

AN EXPOSITION OF

STOIC AND RATIONALISTIC ETHICS

WITH

A Comparison and Criticism of the Two Systems

BY

REV. W. T. JACKSON, PH. D.

Late Professor of Modern Languages in Indiana University

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

DAYTON, OHIO

UNITED BRETHREN PUBLISHING HOUSE

1881

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TO

PROFESSORS COCKER, FRIEZE AND MORRIS

OF MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY,

HONORED ALIKE FOR SOUND SCHOLARSHIP AND MORAL WORTH,

THIS HUMBLE FRUIT OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY,

PURSUED UNDER THEIR DIRECTION,

IS INSCRIBED

WITH THE RESPECT AND GRATITUDE OF

The Author.

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PREFACE.

Philosophical studies, always important, have in late years acquired special significance, when the theories of the past and the institutions which embody them; when law, religion, and government, as well as history, literature, and art, are undergoing a searching criticism; when of necessity there is a constant recurrence to first principles, and all things are brought, as far as possible, to the test of right reason.

The following is a humble contribution to philosophical literature in the department of ethics. It was originally prepared as a thesis for the Doctor's degree in Michigan University, and, at the suggestion of friends, has been enlarged and made ready for the press. I have sought in the expository portions to state fairly, as well as clearly and briefly, the doctrines of the authors discussed; to put into order and connection what I have found scattered here and there; to avoid technicalities, or explain them; and to preserve, as far as may be, in an English dress the expressions used by the authors themselves.

It is precisely one hundred years since Kant's *Critique of the Pure Reason* was first published, his *Critique of the Practical Reason* following seven years later, while Stoicism arose as a distinct system more than two thousand years ago. Both

systems have been widely influential, and they have had time to exhibit their fruits.

It is believed that the subjects treated will be of interest not only to those whose vocation, in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the halls of instruction, constantly requires them to consider the grave problem of right, but also to that other class of thinkers who, apart from their occupation, are interested in all that has been thought by the world's great intellects of the past.

The heathen philosopher, ignorant of Christianity, and the rationalist, who ignores it, may yet teach us some of the sublimest moral doctrines that are in perfect accord with Christianity; while their very failures serve only, by contrast, to disclose new beauty in its imperishable truths.

If this book shall serve in any degree to make available the thoughts of two eminent leaders of thought, one in the ancient and one in the modern world; if, still more, it shall conduce to right thinking on the all-important subject of which it treats, and to right acting as well, its end will be attained.

My obligations are gratefully acknowledged to Dr. W. T. Harris, late of St. Louis, for the loan of a rare work, and to many esteemed friends for valuable suggestions.

ACADEMY, Fostoria, Ohio,
September, 1881.

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CHAPTER I

SENECA AND KANT.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—The Rise and Causes of Stoicism—Intellectual Origin—Historical Origin—Socrates—Zeno—Seneca.

The causes of Stoicism were both intellectual and political. It is not difficult to trace its parentage directly to Cynicism, and indirectly to Socrates and Heraclitus; while many points of relationship with Aristotle are also visible. Thus the doctrine of an ethereal fire, which in regular cycles absorbs and consumes all things, is clearly Heraclitean; the doctrine of a world-soul, and the assumed union of matter and spirit (or form) are taken from Plato and Aristotle. But as we are concerned more directly with the ethics of the Stoics, we may add that their greatest obligations in this department are to the Cynical school of Antisthenes and Diogenes.

That many-sided philosopher and moral

hero, Socrates, had perished at Athens, 399 B. C. Justly does Dr. Smith call him, in view of the powerful impulse which he gave to philosophy, and especially as being the intellectual parent of the great lights that followed him, "the greatest and most original of the Grecian philosophers." * It was natural that he should have many followers, and equally natural that each of them should comprehend but a part of their master's character and doctrine. A Plato might drink deeply into his whole spirit and teaching, but Euclid could see little more in them than dialectics; Aristippus could understand only the eudæmonistic side; while to cynical Antisthenes, his master's excellence consisted chiefly in his rude and slovenly dress, his disregard of all conventionalities, his forbearance under domestic and other tribulations, his marvelous self-control and unflinching adherence to his convictions.

These men, no doubt, assimilated such parts of the admired Socrates as were congenial to their own natures; and we may

*Student's Hist. of Greece, p. 418.

well imagine, therefore, the sternness of Antisthenes, when he imbibed all that was harsh and forbidding in the character of his master. With him virtue alone must be sought, enjoyment banished, and self-control be the constant watch-word. There must be no taste in dress or language,—the balder and rougher the better,—with a contempt for the religion and government of the times. Such, in brief, was Cynicism; and we can readily discern in it the very form and many of the lineaments of Stoicism.

But this was not all. Philosophy usually reflects its times. A practical age calls forth a practical philosophy; an eminently reverential age evokes a theological, often a mystical philosophy; while a skeptical, irreverent age as surely begets a skeptical or rationalistic philosophy. When the intellect is quickened, and the desire for knowledge and refinement is awakened, freedom of government, and especially national discussions and uprisings in the interest of freedom, conspire to enkindle a freedom and vigor of thought that seem to border al-

most on the miraculous. Such were the Elizabethan age of English, and the Periclean age of Greek literature.

Philosophy shares this impulse. In the palmy days of Greek freedom, when united she feared no foe, when she was mistress of both power and culture, thought sympathized with the general elevation, and soared to moral and intellectual heights before unattained. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, each in a different way, showed what the human mind can do when, kindled to a noble activity, it has proper encouragement from society and protection from government. But when tyranny is crushing the life out of its subjects; when a base servility shapes every thought, sentiment, and custom of the age, the spirit of man droops; and as all inspiration languishes, philosophy languishes also, or perishes altogether. Such was the condition of Rome under such monsters as Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero, in the days of the later Stoicism.

It is scarcely better when society is in a state of constant revolution and chaos; when

government, religion—all institutions, are giving way, and men know not which way to look for hope. Such was the unhappy condition of Greece when Stoicism first sprung up and flourished on her soil. Yet as the sweetest poetry has often sprung from the sorrow of the soul, so some of the richest gems of truth have been called forth by the afflictions of life.

In the year 338 B. C., or eighteen years before Zeno came to Athens, Philip had given the death-blow to Grecian independence on the disastrous field of Chæronea. The spirit of jealousy and dissension between states was rife, and Philip knew how to feed it and turn it to his own account. Thus jealousy and intestine strife were constantly weakening and devouring, until they gave way to a common lamentation over a common ruin. Alexander might appeal to their patriotism; might lead them forth to conquer a world; might carry his victorious arms from the Ister to the Indus, and from the Lybian to the Bactrian desert; might spread the Greek language and literature everywhere;

but little it mattered to the Greeks, while with the language was published the fact that they were a conquered nation.

Nor were they destined to be completely absorbed in the new empire, and by forgetting the past to transfer their affections to the new dynasty. Rome soon appears on the scene, and the role of Philip is played again. The overthrow is complete, when Greece sinks to the condition of a Roman province.

While these great changes were taking place outwardly, what was the condition of the internal life of the nation? We may be sure that great changes were occurring there also. During and after the Persian wars, Persian gold was silently but surely corrupting the fountains of their strength and purity. With the decline of national prosperity and the spread of corruption, the religious faith was giving way; and what was now to take its place? From the temples of gods and goddesses, men turned to the schools and groves of the philosophers.

Socrates had taught some of the noblest

moral precepts, and immortalized them by his death. Plato had passed a tranquil life, dedicated more to intellectual than to moral aims. Aristotle had reared a solid and magnificent intellectual structure, but had been compelled, on a false charge, to flee from the city for his life. And now, as interest in the nation declines, interest in the individual increases. No longer is the old theory prevalent, that the individual lives for the state, but rather *he lives within himself.* Military and political life, once so glorious, have now dropped into mercenary insignificance, and have no longer any charms for a noble mind. *The inner life, the life of the soul,* is the only safe intrenchment against the calamities that beset the world without.

As Poetter well says: "While thus satisfaction in the objective world vanishes, the mind withdraws itself into its own subjectivity. It concerns itself no longer about the knowledge of the world, but rather about freedom from the world."* Zeller remarks that "the bloom of Greek philosophy was

*Geschichte der Philosophie, Theil I., p. 100.

short-lived."* Yet let us look among the vines for the later vintage; perhaps we shall find a few clusters that have withstood the frosts and storms, nay, that have even been ripened by their influence.

We have seen that it was not altogether a new thing in Greek philosophy that attention should be directed chiefly to man. Socrates had done this. He had emphasized the nobility and superiority of a life of virtue over a life of mere sense. The Sophists, though with far less noble aims, had done the same. They had taught a shrewd, money-making, not a noble, elevating philosophy, in which "man was the center and measure of all things." The Cynics, as we have seen, though with an entirely opposite purpose, did substantially the same.

Now there arise three schools, side by side, whose leaders are priests serving a common deity of self, only at different altars. Epicurus sounds the note of pleasure and self-satisfaction, preferring indeed that it be virtuous, but not disallowing it when vicious.

*Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, p. 10.

Pyrrho, of the skeptical school, will rather have men refrain from all dogmatizing of any sort, and finds peace of mind, he thinks, in the cautious attitude of thorough non-committalism. His attitude in the world is that of a visitor. "Hands off!" is his watch-word. "Nothing ventured, nothing lost." Not so Zeno and Chrysippus. To the heavy brunt of calamity and woe, they bring the active resistance of a mind, fortified by the determination to cling to virtue, at whatever cost. Thus the course of philosophy had long been directed to man, and the course of events now tended to keep it there.

The founder of Stoicism* was Zeno of Cittium in Cyprus, who by the accident of a shipwreck was brought to Athens about 320 B. C. Having studied the Cynic, Megaric, and Academic philosophies, he founded, 310 B. C., a school of his own, called Stoic, from the *Στοὰ ποικίλη*, where it assembled. Himself and his school were held in high respect by the Athenians, who honored him

*Zeller, also Ueberweg, Hist. of Phil., Vol. I., sub voce.

after his death with a tomb and brazen monument at the public expense. His writings, though numerous, have all been lost. He was succeeded by Cleanthes, of Assos, whose celebrated hymn to the Deity is still extant.

But by far the most noteworthy personage in the early Stoic philosophy was Chrysippus,* of Soli in Cilicia. He so developed and elaborated the system that he has deservedly been called the second founder of Stoicism. He was a most voluminous writer, his works numbering seven hundred and five. Other representatives of Greek Stoicism were Persæus, Aristo of Chios, Herillus of Carthage, Diogenes of Seleucia, and Antipater of Tarsus. These names are found in the flourishing period of Greek Stoicism, or in the century and a half succeeding its establishment.

About the middle of the second century B. C., Panætius of Rhodes introduced Stoicism into Rome, where it gained many distinguished and learned disciples; among them, though with some modifications, Cicero, Læ-

*Zeller, p. 40; also, Ueberweg, Vol. I., p. 185ff.

lius, Scipio, Seneca, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Other Stoics of this period were Posidonius of Apamea, Athenodorus of Tarsus, Diodotus, the teacher of Cicero, Cornutus, Musonius, and especially Epictetus. In these writers, though we often find all the harshness and rigor of the early Stoic doctrine, yet on the whole, in theory and practice a decided leaning toward Eclecticism prevails.

L. Annæus Seneca, upon whose presentation of Stoicism we shall chiefly rely, was born at Cordova, Spain, about the year 5, A. D. The family removed to Rome, where he was favored with wealth and the highest social and educational advantages. He was soon an advocate of prominence, then quæstor. But the jealousy of Caligula and Claudius resulted in his exile to Corsica. There for eight years he gave himself closely to the study of philosophy.

On the accession of Nero he is recalled, made prætor, and becomes tutor of the emperor, whose ungovernable lust and cruelty, however, he is totally powerless to restrain.

Now he rides on the full tide of wealth, honor, and royal favor, preserving, however, amid all this splendor, a Stoic abstemiousness in his habits. Soon the nobles are jealous and intrigue against him. He sees with alarm that the capricious Nero is alienated from him, and fearing a worse fate, offers to surrender to him all his vast wealth. This proposal, with his retirement from the city, hardly appeases the despot's anger. On the outbreak of the conspiracy of Piso, he is charged with being a participant. Nero resolves on his death. Seneca does not await the issue, but like a true Stoic, hears the tidings with calmness, as the voice of fate, and takes his life by a lingering death. His philosophical works had been composed partly during his exile in Corsica, partly in brief intervals snatched from political cares, and partly in retirement after his loss of royal favor.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II.

The Ethical Doctrines of Stoicism.*

What, now, is philosophy with the Stoics? It is wholly a practical matter, the knowledge and practice of the means to be used to secure inward tranquillity and happiness. It is, hence, essentially ethical, and the study of logic and physics is entirely subordinated to this end. To use one of their comparisons, logic is the shell, physics the white, and ethics the yolk; or, again, logic is the skeleton, physics the flesh, and ethics the soul.†

Their theory of physics has a close and important bearing on their ethical doctrine. They assume in nature two ultimate principles, —matter and force. Matter is passive, and capable of receiving all motion; the working, moving force is God, and these are insepara-

* The following account of Stoicism has been drawn chiefly from Seneca's *De Providentia*, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, *De Brevitate Vitæ*, *De Vita Beata* and *Epistolæ*, the author seeking, in this and the following chapter, merely to act as a faithful interpreter, suffering Seneca and Kant, as much as possible, to speak for themselves, and reserving for a future chapter a discussion of their doctrines.

† Posidonius in Ueberweg, Vol. I., Art. Stoicism.

bly united. They reason thus: The universe is limited and spherical, and though possessing great variety of parts, is substantially a unity. This unity, as a whole, must be more perfect than any of its parts, some of which we see to be self-conscious. Hence, the universe is pervaded by an ethereal fire, which is its soul and reason; that is, God. By an absolute necessity, or inner law of the divine reason, all things are, in definite periods, absorbed into the Deity, to be evolved anew at the appointed time. The soul of man is an emanation from the Deity, and as such may outlive the body, but can not endure beyond the cycle to which it belongs. In this doctrine of physics we can readily recognize, though with a new application, Plato's idea of a world-soul, and Aristotle's union of matter and form, before alluded to; while the bearing of the doctrine toward fatalism, pantheism, and materialism will be distinctly noticed.

Almost all the ethical doctrines of the Stoics may be comprised in the two propositions:

I. *That virtue consists in conformity to nature.*

II. *That virtue is sufficient for happiness.*

But it is very important to understand precisely what the Stoics mean by the terms "happiness," "virtue," and "conformity to nature," or we can gain no intelligible idea of their system.

1. *Virtue consists in conformity to nature.*

According to Zeno, the ethical end of man is "to live in harmony with one's self;" according to Cleanthes, it is "to live conformably to nature,"—that is, to the course of the universe; while Chrysippus combines both man and nature. "Live," says he, "according to *your experience* of the course of nature." Among the later Stoics there is the same difference. Diogenes Babylonius would have "prudence and reason" used in selecting "things according to nature." Antipater of Tarsus would make it "the unvarying choice of things conformable, and rejection of things nonconformable, to nature." So, substantially, Panætius and Posidonius. Seneca, with his usual terseness, says it is sufficient to say simply, "Living conformably;" that is, consistently; since it is only reason that will

always choose the same things and reject the same.*

It will be seen that there is some diversity of views expressed as to what this nature is, to which conformity is required,—whether it is the rational nature of man, or the system of laws established by the Deity. Both views are held, without much attempt to reconcile them; but the emphasis is laid chiefly on the latter, as the sequel will show.

We are thus brought face to face with the assumption, already hinted at in the physics, that there is a course of the universe, a mighty machinery of fate, whose wheels roll on perpetually, and powerless our help or hinderance. Our duty is but to submit. "Fate leads us on," says Seneca, "and what of time remains for each of us, the first hour of our birth allotted. * * * A long time ago it was appointed what you should rejoice over, what you should weep over. Cause depends upon cause, and * * * nothing *happens*, but it *comes*."†

*Ueberweg's Hist. Phil., Vol. I., pp. 198–200.

†Seneca's Moral Essays, Hurst & Whiting's Ed., De Providentia, Cap. V

But this course of nature is not a mere blind and irrational mechanism that works, it knows not why; it is the expression of the Supreme Reason of the universe, the voice of the Deity himself. It is the all-controlling law from which even God is not exempt. Says Seneca, "The Founder and Controller of all things wrote the fates, indeed, but he obeys them himself; he commanded *once*, he *obeys always*;"* by which I understand that the course of nature which he established is a rational one, and he obeys it therefore voluntarily. This explains why the terms "fate" and "providence," "reason" and "nature," are used interchangeably.

The first great duty of a wise man, therefore, is unconditional submission to the course of nature. As he is, in part at least, a rational being, he must voluntarily acknowledge and obey the rational order of the universe. "What is the duty of a wise man?" asks Seneca. "To surrender himself to fate. It is a great comfort to be borne along with the universe. We are all chained to fortune,

*Ibid., Cap. VI.

but what does it matter? The same custody surrounds all, and they are themselves bound who have bound us."* Nor will he do this grudgingly. On the contrary, so ready will he be to accede to the demands of so elevated a law, that he would even anticipate its requirements if he knew them, and obey them in advance.

If obedience requires suffering, it matters not. "Whatever must be endured in accordance with the constitution of the universe," says Seneca, "will be [cheerfully accepted and] turned to account (*usurpetur*) by a great mind. By this oath we have been bound, to bear those earthly ills which it is out of our power to avoid, and not to be disturbed by them. We have been born in a *government:* to obey God is liberty Good men are not dragged by Fortune: they follow and keep up with her; if they had known, they would have anticipated her."† Demetrius complains of the Deity for not making known his will. He says he would rather *offer* than *surrender.* His children, his health, his life

*De Tranq. An., X., 2, 3. †De Vita Beata, XV., 6.

might be taken—his consent should not be withheld; "for," says he, "I know that all things occur according to a fixed law, decreed for all time."

The watch-word of the true Stoic is well expressed in the following lines from the hymn of Cleanthes, translated thus by Cicero:

> "Duc, O parens, celsique dominator poli,
> Quocumque placuit: nulla parendi mora est,
> * * * * * *
> *Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.*"

Which may be retranslated freely as follows:

> Lead me, O Parent, ruler of high heaven,
> Where'er thou'rt pleased; I'll not be tardy to obey.
> * * * * * * *
> The fates e'er *lead* the willing man; unwilling ones they *drag*.

Thus, as Zeller has said, virtue, with the Stoic, begins with acknowledging the rational order of the universe, and ends with unhesitating obedience to it.

II. *In this submission to the course of nature, or virtue, and it alone, is found true happiness.* "To live happily," says Seneca, "is the same thing as to live according to nat-

ure."* This is not to be confounded with mere pleasure: these are with the Stoic very different things. Happiness is that calm enjoyment of the soul which is connected only with virtue. It is the harmony of the soul, in which it is conscious of no dissension nor hesitation, but of perfect compliance with its own reason, and, therefore, the reason of the universe. Hence Seneca says, "You may therefore boldly avow that the highest good [virtue] is the harmony of the soul."† Pleasure, on the contrary, springs from our passions, our desires, and our hopes. These fluctuate; nor does it always attend even these. Happiness, however, always attends virtue; they are indissolubly united. Pleasure depends on externals, which are beyond our control; happiness has an unfailing fountain within the soul. Pleasure leads to evil; virtue takes us from evil. Pleasure is found among the basest; happiness only among the good. Pleasure, therefore, is to the wise man something entirely indifferent and adventitious, while virtue is an end in itself.

*De Vita Beata, VIII., 1. †Ibid., VIII., 5.

But if virtue is sought for happiness, it is no longer virtue. However pure a thing happiness may be, it never can usurp the place of virtue, and become the highest good. Virtue alone is the *summum bonum*, the all, the end of life. Yet men are perpetually confounding the highest good with pleasure and happiness, and asking, "What do we seek to *gain* by virtue?" as if there could be anything more than the whole, or anything beyond the end. "You mistake," says Seneca, "when you ask, What is that for the sake of which I seek virtue? for you ask for something higher than the highest. Do you ask what I seek from Virtue? Herself! for she has nothing better; she is her own reward."*

"Just as in a field which has been plowed for a crop, some flowers spring up; yet not for these flowers, however much they delight the eye, was so much labor expended. The planter had another purpose; this was incidental. So also happiness is neither the reward nor the cause of virtue, but a mere

*De Vita Beata., IX., 1, 2.

incident of it."* Happiness is called, therefore, only the companion, the accompaniment, the shadow (*comes*, *accessio*, *umbra*) of virtue. Hence the paradox: Not to need happiness is happiness.

After this general view of their doctrine, let us examine more closely their theory of perfect conformity to nature, and of happiness as resulting from this conformity. In doing so, two problems at once present themselves, namely:

1. To show that *everything* (even, for example, the inequalities of our lot, the opposition and tyranny of the wicked) does occur according to a rational course of nature.

2. To explain the possibility of that perfect conformity to this course of nature, which the theory presupposes. Let us see how the Stoics dispose of these difficulties.

1. We must first inquire what end the Deity proposes in the government of the universe. As he is the Supreme Reason, he can not be under the control of passion, and hence can not be malevolent. He manifestly

*Ibid.

proposes that man shall be governed by the same law of reason to which he has voluntarily subjected himself, and conformity to which constitutes virtue. Nothing in the world, therefore, is important but virtue and vice; nothing else need be earnestly sought or shunned. All the objects that men ordinarily seek or fear are entirely indifferent (*ἀδιάφορα*). External goods are but baggage; they are delusive and vain. True blessings, on the contrary, are internal and enduring. The only things we need to fear are "crimes, base thoughts, evil intentions, lust, avarice;"* the only good we need to seek is virtue. The sage may be imprisoned, slandered, deprived of every external blessing and even life, but while he possesses this treasure he is tranquil and happy.

But does everything, even calamity and reproach, take place according to a rational plan? "Yes," answers the Stoic. The course of the world has been arranged, not to secure pleasure, but virtue, and therefore enduring happiness. It is unreasonable, argues Sen

*De Prov., VI., 1.

eca, that the Good should injure the good. They have the common bond of virtue to unite them; and good men are imitators and emulators of the Supreme Good. But virtue requires discipline; and hence good men are inured to toil and hardships, while the wicked are allowed to be voluptuous and sensual. Like athletes, the good must be subjected to severe discipline; they must wrestle and struggle with capricious Fortune, and endure all her buffetings manfully. How could the excellence of virtue be seen without trial? Where would be patience, if there were no bereavements and losses? So lofty is Virtue, we need not expect to reach her by a level path: we must look for precipitous heights and toilsome climbing. Hence another paradox: "The ills of life are not ills, except to those who bear them ill."*

But while the Deity's discipline is stern, it is also loving. He well knows that untroubled pleasure, like the fattening of animals for the stall, produces helplessness. He admires the bold struggling and moral forti-

*Ibid., passim.

tude of a brave man; and as the most gifted pupils receive the hardest tasks, and the bravest soldiers are chosen for the most perilous assaults, so it is a mark of his favor to be chosen as an adversary of Fortune. Prosperity is given only to the mass, and to those of low talents. So again we have the paradox: "Never to have been miserable is to be miserable."

How, now, will one of noble mind receive this discipline of Providence? He will regard all adversities as disciplines, and, amid all the assaults of Fortune, he will stand as unchangeable as the saltness of the sea. While not without sensibility, he will remain placid, never yielding to circumstances, but making everything conduce to the attainment of virtue. Thus, by putting a favorable construction on everything, the ills of life will lose their bitterness; he will become indifferent to Fortune, and even dare her to do her worst. Like the gladiator who sighed that the flower of his youth was passing, and that exhibitions were so rare, he will long for an occasion to call forth his heroism, lest his

virtue fade by disuse. Far from self-seeking and love of pleasure, his will be the spirit of a Mucius Scævola, calmly holding his hand in the flames, from patriotism, or of a Regulus, suffering torture but not disgrace. Never will he suffer from luxury; leave that for a Mæcenas or a Nero. His sufferings, if such they can be called, will be of another sort.*

He now knows, too, and can trust himself. Not like one who has obtained the empty glory of a crown at Olympia without a competitor, he has won his by the sweat and dust of a hotly-contested race. He stands also as a living example, to show that the opinions of the multitude concerning blessings and trials are false. "He spends and is spent willingly."† He regards his life and whatever he possesses as not his own, but as lent to him. Whenever he shall be bidden to return it, he will not complain to Fortune, but will say, "I give you thanks for that which I have possessed and enjoyed. I have tilled your property at great cost, it

*De Prov., II., 1 ff. †Ibid., V., 3.

is true, but because you command, I give it up. I surrender it cheerfully and willingly; * * * take back a soul better than you gave it; I do not evade you nor flee from you." *

2. We are now ready to inquire as to the possibility of such a perfect conformity to the course of nature as the theory requires. Admitting that no real evil can befall the Stoic's good man; that he possesses the divine alchemy of transmuting every loss and cross into a blessing, can all obtain this magic power? Can the sage at all times retain it? This is the crucial test of Stoicism.

They confess that, like the original dualism of matter and reason in the universe, there is a dualism of passion and reason in man, with this difference, that passion, alas! is ever active. But they maintain that emotion always springs from false imagination, and never exists with a rational view of things. Thus from a false and irrational conception of present and future good spring

*De Tranq. An., XI., 1, 2, 3.

pleasure and desire, and from imaginary present and future ill, care and fear.* In reality there is no ground for them. They are diseases of the soul, and a sure evidence of lack of self-control. The sage, therefore, must be *absolutely free* from passion. If any exception be made, he may smile at the follies of men; but even this is, as a rule, to be avoided. To do otherwise would be to make indifferent things objects of importance. Why should he grieve over physical pain, reproach, or loss of property, friends, or reputation? They are not evils for himself, and if not, why grieve when they fall to the lot of others? Says Seneca: "All things, therefore, are to be made light of and borne with tranquil mind. To be tortured with others' misfortunes is a perpetual misery; to rejoice over them is an inhuman pleasure."† He even goes so far as to say that it is a useless sympathy to weep and knit one's brow, even though some one is burying his daughter.‡

We can now understand why some of the

*Cf. Zeller, p. 237. †De Tranq. An., XV., 2-4. ‡Ibid., XV., 4.

Stoics say that virtue is conformity with the nature of the universe, and others, that it is conformity with the nature of man. These definitions may be interpreted as identical. The course of the universe is founded on reason, and the true nature of man is reason. "What can be better for us, who have received a rational nature," says Seneca, "than reason."* "Zeno," says Cicero, "placed all the virtues in reason." † And Cicero himself says, "Virtue can be briefly defined as right reason." ‡ In reason, therefore, alone does man find his harmony and oneness with the universe. By its magic power all discord, internal and external, ceases. Calm, indifferent to all else, he embarks on the stream of fate, his mind fixed on this single object, that no side-currents nor adverse winds shall hinder him or drift him ashore.

To maintain this supremacy of reason, now, certain precepts are repeatedly insisted upon:

(1.) The passions must be thoroughly sub-

*De Vita Beata., XIV., 1. †Cic. Acad., I., 10.
‡Tusc. Disp., IV., 15, 34.

dued and even extirpated. "The greatest and noblest thing and most like the Deity,"* we are told, "is, Not to be disturbed." The mind must remain in a placid state—never lated, never depressed. Only thus can the sage maintain his supremacy of reason.

(2.) He must withdraw from public affairs, and all exciting scenes, whenever his tranquillity and independence are threatened. What cares he for politics or state? The world is his country. Honor is but vanity, wealth is but a burden, patriotism an irrational passion. His virtue is his only treasure, and nothing is to allure him from it.

(3.) He must also accustom himself to the greatest simplicity in apparel, food, furniture, —in all his surroundings. Luxury ministers only to passion; it must be proscribed as a deadly foe. "We must be accustomed," says Seneca, "to remove from ourselves all display, * * * to restrain all luxury, to govern our appetites, and to measure things by their use, not by their ornament." † Wealth must not be sought. An amount but little

*De Tranq. An., II., 3, 4. †Ibid., IX., 1, 2.

removed from poverty, and far removed from riches, so that his independence shall not be sacrificed on the one hand, nor his vanity tempted on the other, is to be the limit of his wishes.

(4.) Above all, he must withdraw within himself, and find in contemplation a satisfaction which he despairs of finding, and is forbidden to seek, in the world. "*In se revocandum est;*" "*in se recedendum est,*"* is the favorite text on which the Stoic teachers love to dwell, and to which they constantly revert. In short, the sage is to be jealous of Fortune; he is to trust himself as little as possible to her caprices; he is to be ready at all times for the worst, and never to be disconcerted by it. With but few sails spread, the rest cautiously furled, prepared for all weathers and accidents, he is to stand persistently at the helm, from which no amusements are to entice, nor storms drive him away.

But what if adversities are too severe for mortal flesh and blood? Can that ever happen? "Yes, it may," say the Stoics. When-

*We must withdraw [the mind]; must retire within ourselves.

ever the sage by living must forfeit his independence by reason of tyranny, poverty, or other unavoidable evils, he may and ought to take his own life. "The door stands open," says Seneca; "life is easily taken,"* and life and death are things indifferent. The sage never fears death. When impassable barriers surround him, he will know that it is the voice of the Deity summoning him, and he will obey. This precept was faithfully executed by Zeno, Cleanthes, Cato Minor, Seneca, and others.

To recapitulate: The Stoics teach the original dualism of matter and force; that this force is the Supreme Reason, the soul of the universe; that the Supreme Reason has established a rational course of the universe, by which all things take place according to a fixed law or fate; that he himself is subject to this law; that it is the duty of the wise man to conform to this law, since he is a rational being; that this conformity constitutes virtue, and virtue secures happiness; that to this end hardships, trials, and losses

*De Prov., VI., 6, and Cic. Tusc. Disp., I., 74.

are allotted by the Deity to the virtuous man as a discipline; that virtue is the only good and a sufficient good; that all other so-called goods are illusive and spring from passion, and not reason; that passion is therefore to be repressed, and reason invariably obeyed; that all which ministers to passion is to be curtailed or avoided, and contemplation and satisfaction in one's self cultivated; and, finally, that no evils are to be feared but wickedness,—not even death, which is to be sought when virtue can not otherwise be maintained.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III.

The Ethical System of Kant.

We are now ready to compare with the foregoing system the doctrine of Kant.

Immanuel Kant, the founder of the Critical or Transcendental School of German philosophy, was born at Königsberg, Prussia, in 1724. He was of Scottish descent, the orthography of the family name, originally Cant, having been changed to Kant to prevent the pronunciation, Tsant. He was a profound linguist, mathematician, and philosopher; yet not early did his superior abilities command public recognition. Not till his forty-sixth year (1770) was he appointed professor of logic and metaphysics in the university of his native city. His life was devoted to study; and such was his aversion to travel that he is said never to have gone farther than thirty-two miles from Königsberg.

In person he was short and very spare, his feeble frame and hollow chest betokening an

early death, rather than the long and laborious life which was granted to him. While simple in dress and manners, he was rigidly methodical in all his habits. Study, diet, sleep, and exercise were regulated with mathematical precision. Independence was a marked trait of his character. During his student career at the university, he was compelled to maintain a constant struggle with poverty, yet he preferred to wear a shabby coat rather than accept any proffers of assistance. When he had risen to eminence he was visited by throngs of admirers, whom he took great pleasure in entertaining, but always strictly within the limits of time which he had marked out for himself.

Although a profound thinker, he was also interested in lighter themes, and read and reread such works as "Tale of a Tub," and "Hudibras." As a lecturer, he was entertaining and popular, and attracted crowds of students and visitors. His friendships were warm and lasting. The attachment between him and the English merchant, Green, has a touch of romance in it. His manners were agree-

able, and he was entertaining even to children. His benevolent disposition is shown in his liberal bestowments while living, and the generous disposition of his property at his death. His calm and meditative life was protracted to fourscore years, his death occurring in 1804.

His published works are numerous. Perhaps the best known are his "Critique* of the Pure Reason," "Critique of the Practical Reason," "Critique of the Faculty of Judgment," "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone," and "A General History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens." The following statement of his doctrine has been drawn chiefly from his "Groundwork (or Fundamental Principles) of the Metaphysic of Ethics."

KANT'S ETHICS.

It will be convenient to consider the subject under the following heads:

I. The Doctrine. II. Its Ground. III. Its End. IV. Its Postulates.

*Or, Critical Examination.

I. Kant sets out with the assertion that there is nothing in the world that can be called absolutely and entirely good but a good will. This is good, not for the beneficial effects that it produces, but in and of itself. If happiness were the true object of nature in the constitution of man, he has certainly been very poorly constituted to attain this end. Instinct would have reached it far more unerringly than reason. In fact, the more purposely a refined mind seeks its own enjoyment, the less true contentment it finds. This proves that reason has a higher and nobler end than happiness; namely, to produce in us a good will, not for any ulterior end, but as a good in itself.*

When, now, Kant comes to develop the notion of a good will, he finds involved in it the cognate notion of duty, which must first be explained. This he finds to be independent of all ideas of expediency, usefulness, inclination, or subserviency to other purposes: it is an end in itself. It is "the obligation

*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten. von Kirchmann's ed., Seite 12 ff. Also, Abbott's and Semple's translations.

to an action, which arises from respect for the moral law."* Thus my reason declares a certain course of conduct to be right. This is for me the moral law. As a rational being, I must respect its behests, and am obligated to perform them. This obligation is duty.

This conception of duty, therefore,—whether we consider its source, as not coming from without, but as self-imposed by the reason; or its essence, as respecting not primarily the outward action, nor the effects which such action might produce, but first of all, the attitude of the actor to the moral law itself, namely, that of respect,—necessarily leads us back to the conception of a good will. In the language of Kant, "The notion of duty includes that of a good will, although under certain subjective limitations and hinderances. These, however, far from concealing it or rendering it unrecognizable, rather bring it out by contrast, and make it shine the brighter."†

But here we must not confound things that are apparently the same, but radically

*v. Kirch., p. 18. †Ibid., p. 14.

different. For example, it is the duty of a merchant not to overcharge his customers. Commercial prudence also dictates the same course. But actions springing from the latter motive are utterly void of moral value. It is also a duty to preserve one's life. Most men do so from the constitution of their nature. But only when a man, in the presence of distress and sorrow, would fain choose death, yet refuses it, influenced by duty alone, does his course in this respect have any moral worth. To use Kant's words: "An action performed out of duty must entirely exclude the influence of inclination," and of "every object to be gained by it; so that there remains nothing that can determine the will, but, objectively, the law, and, subjectively, pure reverence for it."*

Now, the first characteristic of the moral law is, that it commands, and commands without any condition. Its absolutely unconditional mandate is, "Thou shalt! thou oughtest!" The moral law takes the form of a command, since man is a sensuous as

*Ibid., p. 19.

well as rational being, and does not conform to its requirements without effort and sacrifice. In the technical language of Kant, "All imperatives are expressed by the word *ought*, and indicate thereby the relation of an objective law of reason to a will which, by virtue of its subjective constitution, is not *necessarily* determined by it."*

"Now, all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically." When the action commanded is good "only as a means *to something else*," the imperative is hypothetical; but when the action is conceived as *good in itself*, that is, as the action of a will "which of itself conforms to reason," the imperative is categorical. Thus all the precepts of prudence, or skill in the relation of means to one's greatest welfare, are hypothetical; "the action is not commanded absolutely, but only as a means to another purpose."

But "there is an imperative which commands a certain conduct immediately, without proposing as a condition any other purpose to be attained by it. This imperative is cat-

*Ibid., p. 34.

egorical, * * * and what is essentially good in it consists in the mental disposition, let the consequence be what it will." This is the imperative of morality. I may have *rules* of skill and *counsels* of prudence, but only *commands* of morality.*

In the case of a holy will,—for example, the divine,—the imperative would be entirely inapplicable. "Thou shalt" were misapplied to such a will, it being already of its own accord in harmony with the law. But with man the case is altogether different. His sensuous nature, his appetites, desires, and passions are constantly clamoring for gratifications that are in entire opposition to the moral law. To be happy is his desire—"a desire which every finite rational being necessarily has, since he has unsatisfied wants."† But happiness is of empirical origin; it has no certain basis; it is conditioned by circumstances; it is variable; it is selfish. "To promote our happiness, therefore, never can be an immediate duty; still less can it be the principle of all duty."‡

*v. Kirch., pp. 36–39.

†Kritik der praktischen Vernunft. Abbott's transl. Rem. II., p. 156.

‡Ibid., p. 267.

The moral law, on the contrary, utters its imperative without any regard to happiness. Man's obedience, consequently, is never perfect, and never rendered without a struggle. In Kant's words, "The moral law represents an ideal of holiness not attainable by any creature—an archetype toward which we are ever to approximate. An infinite approximation toward holiness of will is all that is possible for man or any other finite being."*

This mandatory character of the law indicates the proper attitude of a finite intelligence toward it; namely, that of respect or reverence. Kant will have nothing more nor less than this. This respect arises from the conception of a worth and dignity in the law, before which all self-love falls. Kant has no patience with any other disposition in the performance of duty. He will not hear of any willingness, or desire, or pleasure in connection with it. Such conceptions of duty are "nothing but moral fanaticism;" they spring from self-conceit, and "beget a vain, overweening, fantastic way of thinking."† With

*G. zur Met. d S. Semple's transl., pp. 105–132.
†Ibid., p. 134. Abbott, p. 254.

him, duty is downright delving in the heat and dust; it is painful, humiliating, arduous. It is work that requires tense muscle and firm resolve—a constant rowing against the stream.

This respect, though gratifying to reason, is necessarily painful to sense, since the moral law disregards the claims of the sensory, and casts down all self-love and all self-conceit at a blow.* Yet man, in his self-conceit, is ever seeking to circumvent the law, and fritter it down to a means of his own advantage and happiness, flattering himself that he "needs neither spur nor rein;"† that he can be a volunteer, and, without any command, undertake its duties spontaneously, and even with love and delight.

The truth is, however, that its "solemn majesty" so impresses him with its worthiness that he can not avoid, whether he will or not, feeling a respect for it. This respect is painful to his self-love, and he would fain be rid of it. Hence his efforts to find some *purpose*, gratifying to sense, in obedience to the law,

*Cf. Schwegler, Hist. Phil., pp. 255-6.
†Crit. of Prac. Reason. Abbott's transl., pp. 249, 254.

and to make conformity to it minister to his happiness — as if its holy claims were not supreme and to be subordinate to nothing else!

But such conformity is mere legality, no morality. The unyielding, holy precepts of the law "never allow our frivolous self-love to dally with sensory excitement, or plume ourselves upon our meritorious worth."* Let us not flatter ourselves that the law is our servant, to minister to our pleasure and bow to our caprices; it is our rightful lord and master, justly *demanding* our obedience. Like the great law of gravitation in the physical world, it consults neither our convenience nor our wishes, but in conscious majesty makes its unyielding demands peremptorily. "The grade, then, on the ethical scale, where man finds himself, is that of reverence toward the law."† His true moral sentiment is virtue, not holiness; he is to be militant, not perfect.

But what is the nature of this law that commands me so authoritatively? Is it material? No; for "all material principles of morality,

*Ibid., Analytic. Semple's transl., pp. 133–135; Abbott, p. 255.
†Cf. Abbott, p. 253.

that is, all theories that propose an object chosen as determining the will, are one and all taken from sense and experience, and, being *a posteriori*, can not supply a universal law of action."* These theories are all reducible to self-love or desire for private happiness; not only such as Epicureanism and utilitarianism, that are confessedly based on happiness, but also the theories of benevolence, moral sense, perfection, and even obedience to the will of God. For Kant's theory of obedience has already aimed to cut up by the roots all theories of benevolence and perfection. They are in his view egoistic, and spring out of self-love. The benevolent man is gratifying a feeling rather than obeying the law; the Stoic, with all his rigor, is seeking for tranquillity; the so-called moral sense, being sensory, can never promulgate a universal law; moreover, it presupposes the existence and the consciousness of such a law; and he asserts that even obedience to the will of God, without a prior independent principle of mor-

*Ibid., p. 149.

ality, can be a motive only by reason of the happiness expected therefrom.

In Kant's words: "We stand under a *discipline of reason*, and in all our maxims must not forget our subjection to it, nor withdraw anything from it, nor by an egotistic presumption diminish aught of the authority of the law (although our own reason gives it), so as to set the determining principle of the will anywhere else but in the law itself and in respect for the law. Duty and obligation are the only names that we must give to our relation to the moral law." And again: "The majesty of duty *has nothing to do* with enjoyment of life; it has its special law and its special tribunal, and though the two should be never so well shaken together to be given well mixed, like medicine, to the sick soul, yet they will soon separate of themselves, or the former will not act, and the moral life will fade away irrecoverably."*

Why should the moral law command me to seek my happiness? That instinct is already inseparably rooted in my nature. The truth

* Analytic of Pure Practical Reason. Abbott's trans., in sub., pp. 249–60.

is, it does not, but commands something entirely irrespective of my happiness. All these theories are only "maxims"* of my own willing,—empirical, partial, selfish; they can none of them be universally applied. On the contrary, "Reason utters her inexorable command, and holds out to the appetites no prospect nor promise whatsoever." When she gives her command to abstain from lying, it is utterly independent of all ideas of prudence or congeniality to feeling.

As, therefore, all material principles are reducible to self-love, and as self-love affords only a conditional law, a mere "maxim" of willing, the law, as *a priori*, must be purely rational, that is, formal and universal, and may be stated thus: "Act always according to maxims which thou canst wish to be accepted as universal laws."† Weighed in this balance, all my maxims of prudence and self-seeking are found wanting. Have I a right to promise falsely, though in need? to live a life of ease, because I happen to have a competency? to

* Rules of conduct derived from experience, and hence variable, subject to opinion, and not binding upon all.

† Grund. zur Met. der Sitten, Seite 44.

take my own life, because of pain or poverty or trouble? These and a thousand similar questions, when put to the test of universal applicability, at once fall to the ground. I can not conceive a case to which this law would not apply. All the maxims of my will must therefore strictly conform to this law; then the rational and the empirical, the formal and the material, are united in a symmetrical whole, in which Reason is supreme and independent, "the author of her own principles."* This last expression is significant as showing the origin of Kant's moral law, and the character of his whole system.

Now the fact that man can thus break loose from the chains of the sensory and obey the higher law of reason, constitutes the dignity of his nature; and this self-determining power Kant calls the "Autonomy of the Will." In distinction from this, when he fails to conform to it, and yields to the sensory, he falls into the chain of mere mechanical causation; he is no longer self-determined in the true sense; a foreign law rules, and this is "Heteronomy

* Ibid. von Kirchmann, p. 77.

of the Will." The autonomy of a holy will (the divine) is perfect and under the law of necessity, while that of finite beings, not altogether good, is under the law of obligation.* "Autonomy," says Kant, "is the sole principle of ethics,"† for all the rest of man's activity, as we have seen, is void of moral value.

II. Let us now consider the ground of the doctrine above presented. The doctrine of obligation to autonomy, just stated, presents man in a twofold aspect, (1) as giving law; (2) as subject to law; as rational and sensory; as under dynamical and under mechanical laws. He is therefore a citizen of two worlds, with a "twofold set of laws regulating the conduct and exercise of his powers." As a

* In no one step of nature is there any alternative; from what already is, that step which is now proximately future must be taken, and must be so taken as has already been conditioned. There is no autonomy, no will, no personality, consequently no liberty. . . . . The choices of animal nature are component links in this iron chain of necessity as truly as the effects of gravity. It is controlled by appetite and thus by nature, not by its own behest in reason and thus in liberty. Hence the animal is ever thing and never person. Man, also, by as much as he is sentient, is animal only. . . . Except as man has a higher endowment than a sentient nature . . . . in which he may resist and subjugate all the clamorous appetites of sense, and hold them in perpetual servitude to his own ethical end, he neither has nor can have any personality nor responsibility, inasmuch as otherwise he possesses no will in liberty.—Hickok's Rational Psychology, pp. 441–3.

† Anal. der prak. Ver. Abbott, p. 169.

part of the world of sense, he is but a "phenomenon,"* subject to the same laws of mechanical causation and necessity as other phenomena. Were this all, it would follow that every act takes place *necessarily*, by virtue of conditions that happened in past time, now out of his power, and therefore he could not be free. Or, if exempted from the law of physical necessity, his actions would be in the domain of blind chance.

On the other hand, were I independent of the physical system, were I a pure "*noumenon*," * I should be entirely liberated from the law of mechanical causation. No condition of the past, no appetites of the present, could enthrall me or bring me under any heteronomy of will. But I am neither of these, and yet in a sense both. I am both a

* According to Kant, *noumena* are the essential grounds of things as cognized by reason alone, apart from the limitations of the senses; or as we may conceive them to be cognized by the divine mind. Kant calls them also things-in-themselves. In distinction from these, objects, as they appear through the senses, are called phenomena. Here the words are used for purely rational beings and purely physical beings.– Cf. Dr. N. Porter: "The real as thus opposed to the phenomenal is called by Kant the *noumenon*, or thing in itself. This can not be discerned by the senses, nor can it be apprehended by consciousness. It ever flits from our grasp, and leaves phenomena only in our possession, as shadows which do not satisfy us but point to something which we never can reach."—Human Intellect, p. 642.

"*noumenon*" and a "phenomenon." As Poetter says: „Als Noumenon giebt der Menſch das Sittengeſetz; als ſinnliches Weſen iſt er dieſem Geſetze unterworfen." And again: „In der Kritik der praktiſchen Vernunft vindicirt alſo Kant dem Menſchen ein ſchöpferiſches Vermögen. Die theoretiſche Vernunft iſt in keiner Weiſe ſchöpferiſch, ſondern nur erkennend; die praktiſche erbaut ſich ſelbſt ihre Welt"*

But as a rational agent, man must consider himself a member, not so much of the sensible, as of the supersensible system, a system whose laws are entirely independent of mechanical influences, and have their grounds in reason only.† Now the fundamental fact in a rational will is *freedom*. "We must attribute to every rational being possessing a will, the idea of freedom, under which idea alone can he act."‡ This freedom is the power of legislating for himself, and of determining his own causality accordingly: this constitutes true autonomy of will. In Kant's words,

*As a *noumenon* man gives the law of morals; as a sensuous being he is subject to this law. Accordingly, in the *Critical Examination of the Practical Reason*, Kant claims for man a creative power. The pure (speculative) reason is in no way creative, but only cognitive; the practical (moral) constructs its own world.—Poetter's Gesch. der Phil. Theil II., pp. 132–4.

† Grund. zur Met. der Sitten; v. Kirch., p. 83.

‡ Ibid., pp. 76–7.

before quoted, "Reason must regard herself as the author of her own principles;" and again: "As a rational being, and hence as belonging to the supersensible world, man can never think of the causality of his will but under the idea of freedom."* Moral freedom may be defined, then, negatively, as the will's independence of the sensory — "of everything except the moral law;" and, positively, as the power of self-legislation and self-determination.

The freedom of man is further apparent when we remember that the world of *noumena*, according to Kant, contains and underlies the world of phenomena. Hence I, as rational, as a *noumenon*, must regard myself as more immediately connected with the former.† The necessitarians have greatly erred here; for while recognizing man as a rational being, they have applied to his reason the same laws of causality that belong to him as a phenomenon — an evident absurdity. Not less absurd is it to trace the determina-

* Ibid., p. 82.
† Ibid., p. 83.

tions of the will to remote psychological causes acting upon the sensations;* for "this comes at last to, and is in no wise distinguishable from, physical necessity."† If, now, we are asked to define analytically the freedom of an active cause, Kant pronounces it ultimate and incomprehensible. Yet, as we can not think without a category, it may be referred, in his scheme of categories, to Causality, of the class Dynamical.

III. Passing now to consider the end of the law, it is remarked by Kant that everything in the realm of ends has either a price (Preis) or a dignity (Würde). What is subservient to human wants and wishes, has a market-price; but that which constitutes the condition by virtue of which alone anything can be an end in itself, has not merely a relative value, that is, a price, but an intrinsic worth or dignity. Morality alone is this condition, since only by it does man become an end in himself, and a legislator in the realm of ends.‡ All other ends are eudæmonistic

* Cf. H. Spencer's Theory.
† Semple, p. 149.
‡ G. zur M. d. S., von Kirch., p. 60 ff.

and have consequently a price, proportioned to their capacity to yield pleasure; they bring man also under the dominion of mechanical causation.

The dignity or worthiness, therefore, not the happiness of man, is the end of the law.* And this respects not himself alone, but every rational being, who is both a legislator and subject of this realm. "Everything in the created world may be used as a means, man alone excepted." He only is an end in himself. Hence we may now give a content to the formal law before announced, and lay down a second principle of morality as follows: "Act so as to use mankind, both in thine own person and the persons of others, ever as an end and never merely as a means."† Or, combining the two principles in one:

"Act according to the ideal will of all rational beings, as the source of a universal legislation."‡

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*The moral rule, or ultimate rule of right, we have already seen to be that a reasonable being ought to act reasonably; or, as it might otherwise be stated, that all voluntary action should be held subordinate to the dignity of the rational spirit.—Hickok: Moral Science, p. 38.

† G. z. Met. der S., p. 53.

‡ Ibid., pp. 56–9.

IV. Let us now briefly consider the postulates of this doctrine. Is reason perfectly satisfied with the end just announced, namely, the worthiness of man? No. By the constitution of our nature we desire happiness, but this theory provides only for *worthiness* of happiness. Reason plainly intimates that the ideal end of man, the *summum bonum*, would be the union of holiness and happiness. But that state is clearly unattainable here. We can only approximate toward holiness; and happiness — such are the obstructions of sense — often fails to correspond even to the degree of virtue that is attained. We must, therefore, postulate:

1. An endless continuation of our existence, in which, by an endless progress in virtue, holiness may be at length attained. In other words, the theory presupposes the immortality of the soul.

2. As holiness would not realize the highest good without happiness, we must postulate also a being, who, as common ruler in the "kingdoms of nature and grace," will effect the harmony required by reason between

them. In other words, we must postulate the existence of God.

3. We have already adverted to the fact that reason requires the subjection of the sensory to the rational. The categòrical imperative of the moral law, and the conviction of our moral freedom, require us to postulate this subjection, which may be expressed thus: "Thou canst, for thou oughtest."

It would be interesting to consider the application of Kant's ethical principles in his "Elementology of Ethics," his casuistry, and his views on religion. Our limits allow only a passing notice of the latter. In his "Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone," the most unhappy of his works in its antagonism to revelation, Kant distinguishes sharply between moral faith, that is, the faith of reason, and historical or statutory faith, that is, faith in a revelation, and denies that the historical element is binding as an article of faith.

On this point he seems to be almost in harmony with Origen's theory of revelation, that the historical parts of Scripture serve only as a web for the inweaving of divine

mysteries.* "To suppose," says Kant, "historical faith incumbent *as a duty* is superstition. Yet moral faith always allows a man to believe in the historical, in so far as he finds the latter conducive to enlivening his purely moral and religious sentiments."

A dogma or myth is worthless unless it has a moral, that is, a rational, content. Hence the statutory element is ever to be secondary to the moral.† If the reverse prevails, priestcraft and superstition follow. In short, he alleges that everything man fancies he can do, over and above good moral conduct, to render himself acceptable to God, (for example, prostrating himself to the earth, or using images in adoration,) is mere mock-service of the Deity.‡

On the other hand, his doctrine of depravity was rigorous enough for the most orthodox; moreover, on the visible and invisible church, and the Kingdom of God on Earth, he made valuable contributions to theology.

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* Origen's Works, T. & T. Clark's Ed., Vol. I., pp. 291–342.

† Cf. Schwegler, Hist. Phil., pp. 260–1; and Emerson, Conduct of Life, p. 181.

‡ Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, pp. 260–1.

To recapitulate: Kant teaches that the supreme end of man is not happiness, but a good will; that this is an intrinsic, unconditioned good; that only respect for the moral law gives moral worth to an action; that this law is announced by reason, and that its commands are categorical and peremptory; that obligation to obey it is duty, and duty respects not happiness; that respect or reverence for the law is the only feeling with which duty should be performed; that any other obedience is mere legality, not morality; that holiness or moral perfection is in this life impossible, only a will like the divine being holy; that the law, as given by the pure reason, must transcend all material ends and all mere maxims of willing and be purely formal and universal; that fitness for universal application is the formula for all moral action; that man, as rational, is free, but, as a part of nature, is controlled by necessity; that the rational is superior to nature, and hence man possesses autonomy of will; that as morality is an end in itself, every human being, as the subject of morality, must be regarded as an

end, and never merely as a means; that the intelligent application of the formula thus contemplates all rational beings; that worthiness, not happiness, is the end of the law; that, as rational, we must postulate the supremacy of reason over sense, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul; that the moral precepts of Scripture, being rational, are binding upon all, but faith in its history is only voluntary; that true religion differs from morality only in recognizing our duties as divine commands; and, finally, that moral conduct is incumbent on every one, but worship is only tutelary to this end, and optional.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV.

A Comparison and Criticism of the Two Systems.

We are now ready to compare the two systems, and to offer some comments upon them.

From the foregoing presentation, it is clear that with three vital and fundamental points of Stoicism, Kant is in entire harmony. In asserting the dualism and antagonism of sense and reason in man, in demanding the supremacy of reason, and in affirming that by virtue of reason he is a law unto himself, Kant's language is as emphatic as Seneca's. The great doctrine of "the autonomy of reason and the subjection of passion" constitutes the essence of both systems, and Kant is essentially a Stoic. What, then, are their points of difference?

1. The first thing that attracts the reader's attention, perhaps, if we may speak of such a

point in this connection, is a total difference of style. Seneca is terse, pointed, without ornament, and frequently harsh. His sentences are brief and epigrammatic—sometimes to obscurity. Kant's style is also considered sufficiently obscure, but the obscurity proceeds from an opposite cause. Long, involved sentences, clause piled upon clause, and modification after modification, characterize his style.* This quality, combined with his peculiarly technical language, exacts the closest attention of the reader to seize the thought. De Quincey aptly likened his sentences to the cumbersome English stage-coach of his time, of which capacity was the chief recommendation. While differing widely in this respect, they are not unlike, however, in their loose, digressive arrangement, unnecessary and wearisome repetition, and general lack of orderly presentation.

2. One can not fail to notice, also, that Kant brings a more powerful mind to the investigation of the subject. No one will

* Cf. Bowen's Modern Phil., Introduction on Kant.

complain of the vapidness of his thoughts, however ill expressed, which can not always be said of Seneca. His grasp is masterly; and even when we can not agree with him, we are bound to respect him. Kant has grappled with the difficult problems of the will, and the relation of mind to matter, and thrown much light upon them, while these subjects have been left unexplained or in confusion by Seneca.

3. Seneca's theory of physics involved him in inextricable fatalism, with which the duties enjoined by him remain in unreconciled and irreconcilable antagonism. Kant's doctrine of "*noumenon*" and "phenomenon" leaves man a sphere of freedom, and his autonomy is thus rational and consistent.

4. Perhaps the most radical difference between them is found in their doctrines of happiness. Seneca, in harmony with the other Stoics, assumes the perfectibility of man in the present state, by teaching that happiness or tranquillity is indissolubly connected with virtue. Kant utterly rejects this tenet of Stoicism, and affirms that in the

present life virtue and happiness find no correspondence. Yet he admits the theoretical truth of the doctrine, by postulating a future state in which this harmony will at length be consummated.

5. The Stoic theory of life as a discipline, wavers between self-discipline and discipline administered by the Deity; with Kant, it is self-discipline throughout.

6. With Seneca, the moral law has an author. It was established by the Deity, who obeys it himself. With Kant, no personal origin is assigned exterior to the mind, and we are taught that it is the child of reason only.

7. Kant emphasizes the doctrine of freedom as the glory of man and the ground of all virtue; the Stoic finds the chief exhibition of virtue in endurance, and submission to fate. While Seneca's system, therefore, is essentially passive, Kant's system is an active, aggressive course of self-culture.

8. The Stoics discouraged metaphysics proper, and art, as well as all active occupations, enjoining retirement and contemplation

rather than a public career; Kant, although retired himself, took a deep interest in all these.

9. Finally, the Stoics, with uncertain and pantheistic views of the future, justified the taking of one's own life; Kant pronounces suicide a crime of the darkest hue.

Having thus compared the two systems, let us now look at each separately. The great excellence of Kant's system appears in the lofty ideal of virtue which he sets before us. He has climbed heights that are rugged and steep, but he breathes an atmosphere purer and more invigorating than any theory yet presented, with happiness as its supreme end, allows its advocates to reach. With him, virtue is a struggle, not a gratification; a debt, instead of a charity; a sacrifice, and not a luxury. Duty is higher than happiness, and heroism than self-seeking. The grossness, sensualism, and egoism, which tend inevitably to follow all theories of eudæmonism, are evidently struck down at a blow. Naturalism or pantheism fares no better at his hands. Con-

trary to the nature-worship and fatalism of a Spinoza, man is superior to nature, and free.* Here again the avenues to recklessness and passion are closed; for good and evil are not mere "relative conceptions" for man to trifle with, nor can he complacently ascribe all his acts, evil and good, to the will of God.† Freedom brings responsibility, or, to use Kant's expression, obligation to autonomy, and man must respect his own worthiness as an end in itself. This part of Kant's doctrine unquestionably stands on an immovable basis.

Equally elevated and noble is his reverence for the majesty of the moral law. One is reminded of the exulting veneration of the psalmist for the law of God.‡ Kant grows enthusiastic. For once the icy atmosphere becomes genial, as he relaxes from his imperturbable rigor and exclaims, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and longer we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within." ‖ And

* Cf. Wuttke's Christ. Ethics, Vol. I, p. 327 ff.
† Ueberweg, Hist. Phil., Vol. II., pp. 72, 77 sup. ‡ Ps. cxix.
‖ Beschluss der Kritik der praktischen Vernunft; also, Ueberweg, Hist. Phil., Vol. II., p. 184.

surely no one, of whatever creed, who believes in virtue at all, will deny him his meed of praise for holding aloft the torch to erring man, and bidding him look to the noble and imperishable.

But, with all its excellences, the system of Kant contains very serious defects.

1. The means by which I am to recognize the moral law in any given case, is its fitness for universal application. But fitness for universality is an abstraction, a mere algebraic formula. How shall I know what is fit to be universal without a rule to guide me? Is it a sufficient description of gravitation to say that it is universal in nature, or fit to be so? Unless I already know what the good and the right is, or have a Socratic demon to whisper it in my ear, I may be as helpless with Kant's rule as before. In short, Kant has taken the sign instead of the substance, —a very unerring sign, indeed, to those who can recognize it, but not the substance; a guide to the town, instead of the town.

As Cousin says, "By separating duty from interest, which ruins it, and from sentiment,

which enervates it, Kant restored to ethics its true character. He elevated himself very high in the century of Helvetius, in elevating himself to the holy law of duty; but still he did not ascend high enough, he did not reach the reason itself of duty." And again, "If one act must be performed, and another not, it is because there is manifestly an essential difference between these two acts. To found the good on obligation, instead of founding obligation on the good, is therefore to take the effect for the cause, is to make the principle follow from the conclusion." *

The entire import of Kant's formula is, "Exclude all material motives, all considerations of desire, inclination, interest, personal happiness, and the like, and obey only the law which reason announces. You may know this law by the utter absence of empirical elements, of all limitations of time and place. It is binding upon all, ever and everywhere." But what is this more than the Stoics long ago uttered? "Obey reason and not im-

* Lectures on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, Lect. XIV., p. 284 ff.

pulse." They gave, as precepts for obeying reason, the somewhat ambiguous injunctions, "Conform to nature; be at harmony with yourself; be consistent." In universality, it is true, Kant gives a somewhat clearer sign. But the chief value of his rule, like that of the Stoics, is negative. It is lofty and clear in what it prohibits, not so clear in what it enjoins.

2. But when we look a little farther, we find a personal element in the rule which makes it still more objectionable. "Act according to maxims *thou canst wish* to serve as universal laws." Then the element of fitness for universality is to be determined by the wish of the actor. If, therefore, any ultimate standard, any definite guidance, is to be furnished by the rule, it presupposes that all men agree as to what is fit to be universal—a proposition which, if true, needs to be cleared up, to say the least. To dismiss the fundamental principle of ethics with the single trait of fitness for universality, quietly assuming that the conception is indelibly fixed in the mind of every human

being, child and philosopher, savage and cultured, is certainly a *petitio principii*, since the essence of the matter is manifestly untouched. And, furthermore, Kant here falls into the empiricism that he so much dreads and detests, since the essential matter is not scientifically announced, but referred to individual experience.

Even if we say with Kant, Cudworth, and others that a sense of right, a recognition of the eternal and immutable right, is implanted in every rational nature (*inter deos et homines communio juris est. Cic. de Leg.*), when we have secured obedience to reason, have we therefore secured all?

Suppose, for the argument, that we grant the postulated supremacy of reason; that we conceive all mankind as exercising so complete control over their instincts, appetites, and sensibilities in general, that they might be considered as divested of all these troublesome elements except reverence for the moral law; suppose, further, that the ideas of faith, redemption, and salvation should be universally extinguished; that

all revelations from God should be destroyed, all statutes enacted by society annulled; that all the positive institutions of society for judicial, penal, and devotional purposes —courts, prisons, churches, etc.—should be abolished, and that all influence of heredity, habit, prejudice, etc. should henceforth cease; in short, that there should be absolutely nothing prescriptive in morals from any quarter. We should then have perfect autonomy, perfect freedom, perfect individualism. Should we also have perfect morals? Would these rational creatures, with but a single sentiment that could express itself, meet the requirements of the moral law, or be able to make an intelligent use of the formula? Far from it. One contingency yet remains, even in these most favorable surroundings. A *judgment* must be formed as to what is fit to be universal, and this, not only in the simple, but in all the complex relations of life; not only by those of lofty intellectual endowment, but by the average, the mediocre, the dwarf. Granting that a few giant intellects, like Kant, may do well

in carrying out such a formula (though they must be painfully conscious of many mistakes), the mass of mankind lack even the intellectual capacity to make such a law serviceable.

But what of the "Golden Rule?" Does not the same objection apply to it? To this it may be answered that when I am asked to do to others as I would have them do to me, an appeal is made to my self-love as a measure to apply to my conduct toward others—a measure, for mankind in general, far more tangible and applicable than the judgment as to what is fit to be universal. Furthermore, if the "Golden Rule" be considered only a formal principle, it is complemented by the positive precept of love. In Christian ethics, therefore, we do not find the indefiniteness and inapplicability that belong to the Kantian system.

3. But does Kant's postulated supremacy of reason correspond with the fact? According to Kant himself, there is a deep and dark corruption in man's nature, an inherent proneness to evil; and this is not without the daily

confirmation of experience. The majority of mankind do not obey the categorical imperatives of the reason as such; they are restrained by religion, custom, fear, the civil law, and other "material" motives; they seek the pleasures of sense and appetite; and hence are under heteronomy of will. For them the postulated supremacy of reason is a contradiction, their alleged superiority as "*noumena*" over their sensual natures as "phenomena" a mockery, and the resulting freedom claimed for them a nonentity. They have fallen from their autonomy, or they never reached it, and are now mere links in the chain of mechanical causation.

And if, as rational beings, they have fallen into heteronomy, by what power, according to Kant, shall they ever be restored to autonomy? Will the power that was insufficient to keep them from falling be competent to restore them when fallen?

4. Again, the whole system is cold, abstract, and impersonal. There is a law, but no lawgiver or judge, unless we assign to reason those difficult functions. As Mar-

tensen says, "When unmixed, disinterested reverence for law, for the majesty of duty, is mentioned as the motive of duty, though we certainly can not refuse our esteem for his motive, yet neither can we acknowledge it as the highest." * For not the relation to an impersonal law, but only the personal relation of adoring love and gratitude to God himself, can produce the most sincere motive to action in the kingdom of personality. And again, how can mere law bind me, call me to account, summon me before its judgment-seat? † For the mass of mankind, how inapplicable and useless were such a law as Kant has announced! ‡ Conceive, for example, an Esquimau or a Papuan rising to this cold and sublime altitude, where all desire and pleasure, all interest and sympathy are left be-

* Martensen, Christ. Ethics, pp. 319–350.

† Ibid., in sub.

‡ Reason! best and holiest gift of Heaven and bond of union with the Giver! The high title by which the majesty of man claims precedence above all other living creatures! Mysterious faculty, the mother of conscience, f language, of tears, and of smiles! . . . But man is something beside Reason, because his Reason never acts by itself, but must clothe itself in the substance of individual Understanding and specific Inclination, in order to become a reality and an object of consciousness and experience. . . . . Hence the moral laws of the intellectual world, as far as they are deducible from pure Intellect, are never perfectly applicable to our mixed and sensitive nature.—Coleridge, Prin. of Pol. Knowl., Essay IV., *ad fin.*

hind, and there dedicating himself reverentially to the categorical imperatives of the moral law! Surely Kant's system is esoteric indeed; considering the nature of man, it would find audience fit, but very few.

Just here we see the power of Christianity; for it not only teaches, but affords training and help; extends the sympathy of man, and commends to the mercy of God. And with instruction, and more than instruction, do men need sympathy. To the weak, the irresolute, the fallen, how often is mere teaching powerless! For them, Kant, beckoning upward and coldly saying, "Reason! Autonomy! Thou oughtest!" is but sounding the note of despair. Sympathy and help, divine and human, alone can restore them to true rationality. And the cross will never cease to be powerful so long as it is the symbol of tears—the emblem of all that is gracious and loving in God and man.

5. Another obvious criticism of Kant's system is his unscientific treatment of the sensibilities. He degrades them unduly by classing them with the appetites in an indis-

criminate mass, and placing them all in antithesis to the moral law. Then virtue ceases to be virtue the moment one desires it. A man must ever drag himself into obedience, and obey under the lash of command. Reverence, not cheerfulness, is to be the feeling with which he performs every duty. Think of the duties of friendship, or the family circle, performed in such a spirit! Is, then, a kindness less a kindness because it is rendered cheerfully? Or is its virtue enhanced by our knowing that it was bestowed under a stern sense of the categorical imperatives of the moral law, and after a due calculation as to its fitness to furnish a maxim for universal application? Schiller's satirical scruple of conscience was well aimed at this vulnerable point of Kant's philosophy thus:

"The friends whom I love I gladly would serve,
But to this inclination incites me;
And so I am forced from virtue to swerve,
Since my act through affection delights me."

The doubter is admonished as follows:

"The friends whom thou lov'st thou must first seek to scorn,
For to no other way can I guide thee;
'Tis alone with disgust thou canst rightly perform
The acts to which duty would lead thee."*

*Schwegler's Hist. Phil., p. 256.

The truth is, Kant confounds finding pleasure *in* virtue with seeking virtue *for the sake of* pleasure. The two ideas are sufficiently distinct, and the former not nearly so absurd as the latter. Not by any means was it immoral for one of old to say, "I delight to do thy will, O God." His cheerful obedience was certainly nobler than the grudging, painfully-rendered service of others. And what shall we say of him who has lost friends, fortune, health—all but virtue? Shall we deny him the last and only succor—the consolation and comfort, the sustaining power that it affords?

6. Kant's system, further, is one of absolute individualism. In the pure individuality of his own reason, he arrogates to himself the settlement of all questions of morals and religion, and will neither receive instruction nor brook interference. Kant would have every man pursue the journey of life without chart, or guide, or fellowship, trusting to reason alone. Not a ray of light must come on his path from God, or nature, or history, or experience. No cheerful song from others

may gladden his ear, no song dare he sing himself; in reverence and solitude must he thread his way through the wilderness of life, as if he were to be the first and only traveller.

7. In this complete individualism we find also extreme self-sufficiency. If there is a God, he is dumb or unheard. Nature reveals nothing concerning him, inspires no feelings toward him: it speaks only of blind mechanism and fate. Man's origin and destiny are unfathomed mysteries, left in the profoundest silence; nor is it even hinted that the gift of reason would impose certain obligations to the Giver. Reason is deified, and man becomes his own god.

Far more rational was Schleiermacher, who found in man a sense of dependence on a Superior Power, and made this the basis of his theological system. In this feeling, he declared, religion has its root. Hence spring duty, conscience, obedience, prayer, trust, hope, effort. Hence the need, and herein a proof of revelation, with its *divine* command to love man equally, God supremely. Hence

in redemption, as the central thought of revelation, are found those personal, animating motives to a holy life, which spring from gratitude and love, and which the cold, abstract dictates of the reason are of themselves powerless to furnish. Surely this accords with our inmost experience.

8. Finally, Kant's moral system, however noble and helpful in some aspects, is, in its impersonality of the moral law (whose ultimate origin who can tell?), in its placing morality above religion, and in its ignoring all revelation, essentially one of pure rationalism and skepticism. His rigid doctrine of depravity undermines his system theoretically, by taking away its necessary support, namely, the postulated supremacy of reason; and, practically, it is ill adapted to have any power over men.

It would have been exceedingly interesting, if we could have had the record of Kant's inner experience, and have known exactly how far his doctrine consoled him. Unfortunately, the evidence is somewhat conflicting. It is certain that he was born with a melancholy

temperament, and that he believed himself to have largely subdued it by "force of will." He even published an essay on the power of the will to effect this object. At times he was remarkably cheerful and happy, exclaiming, "Is it possible to conceive any human being enjoying better health than I do?" His duties to his fellow-men were discharged with scrupulous fidelity. He was generous. By nature or habit he enjoyed a victory of intellect over the passions that rankle in so many bosoms.

His attitude to Scripture was not altogether hostile. He quotes many of its doctrines with approval, and declares the teachings of the New Testament the best that the world had yet seen.* But, alas! revelation was to him only a system of doctrine, not a story of redemption; his supremacy of reason found no room for faith, but disdained and excluded it. And so faith brought him no angels of mercy to soothe his parting hours. He could not confide in a Savior whom he rejected. He could only find a negative comfort in the thought that he had never

*Abbott's Memoir of Kant, and Dial. of Prac. Reas., pp. 325-8, with Note.

consciously injured any one. The world to come was an unbroken mystery, and he professed an entire ignorance of what the future might bring him.

It is said, indeed, that, having reached his four-score years, he awaited death with resignation, if not with welcome. On a certain occasion he said, "Gentlemen, I do not fear to die. I assure you, as in the presence of God, that if this very night suddenly the summons to death were to reach me, I should bear it with calmness, should raise my hands to heaven and say, 'Blessed be God!' Were it indeed possible that such a whisper as this could reach my ear, 'Four-score years thou hast lived, in which thou hast inflicted much evil upon thy fellow-men,' the case would be different."

But, according to others, this readiness to die arose not from hope and cheerfulness, but from his confessed weariness of life, and "his sense of the misery and uselessness of further existence."*

Even taking the most favorable view,

* Cf. Abbott's Memoir, and Haven's Hist. Phil., pp. 347–352.

we should have to say, "Heroic utterance this for a Stoic in a heathen age! but not for the philosopher of a Christian land." Why self-complacently esteem a self-spun system above all works of gods or men besides? Why prefer the pale, cold light of the moon to the warming, fructifying brightness of the sun?

Reverting now to the Stoics, we must observe in their system, also, as in Kant's:

1. An excessive individualism. The Stoic, in his seclusion, has no conscious place in history; no sympathy with his race; scarcely any with his nation. The past inspires him with no veneration, the future with no hope. Though surrounded by his fellow-beings, he is as solitary as Crusoe, or a shipwrecked mariner drifting on the ocean.

It is true that there were a few alleviations to this solitude. The doctrines that he held had become somewhat crystallized, so that experience might in part light the way for the disciple. His individualism was further modified by his pantheistic views. Borne along by fate, he would sooner or later sink

into the common mass of undistinguishable being, his identity forever lost. Foreseeing *that* grave of his hopes, he would be compelled with his German *confrère* to sing:

„Ohne Kummer ſchlaf' ich ein,
Ohne Hoffnung aufzuſteh'n." *

But in spite of these modifications, his isolation in reference to society, customs, laws, traditions, history, and religion, was as complete as Kant's.

What, now, were the consequences of this isolation? Evidently an offensive self-sufficiency, a haughty egotism, a contemptuous arrogance toward all the irrational herd, who were complacently assumed to be yet under the dominion of passion. There could not fail to be a wide breach of feeling between the two classes; and the sage, however isolated he in reality was, was necessarily regarded as a member of a self-constituted aristocracy.

2. The undue rigor of their doctrine of apathy. So important a factor in the world

* Without grief I fall asleep,
Without hope of rising again.
—Rückert's „Die sterbende Blume."

as feeling can not be wholly ignored and obliterated without disastrous results. But why class all the feelings together as evil? Root out most ruthlessly envy, malice, revenge, avarice, and all their kindred; but why crush love, gratitude, sympathy, and mercy? In truth, amid the foes of virtue, Kant and Seneca would sacrifice its best friends. Admitting that virtue is "conformity to right reason," how can it thrive, whence its motive-power, unless constantly re-enforced by the better sensibilities?* The Stoic of necessity acquired a harsh and repulsive character, destitute of the grace and beauty of true manhood. Such rigor could not but be followed by the most violent reactions; and, accordingly, the grossest lewdness, and, as some allege, even cannibalism were found among them.

It is in endurance and suffering that the excellence of Stoicism appears. There it shines resplendent, and furnishes a theme on which its sages loved to dwell. Never have

* Cf. Goethe, Iphigenie auf Tauris, Act II., Sc. 1.

„Lust und Liebe sind die Fittige
Zu grossen Thaten."

"Pleasure and love are the pinions
To noble deeds."

the adherents of any system of philosophy exhibited greater fortitude amid all sorts of sufferings, national, individual, and domestic, or shown more complete self-control in the midst of luxurious folly, mad ambition, and ungovernable avarice. This it is that has made the very name of Stoicism a synonym for unflinching, uncomplaining endurance.

Some have criticised their doctrine of suicide; and, viewed in one aspect, it is a confession of the failure of their system. The system assumes a perfectibility of character, and an order of nature perfectly adapted to secure this perfection; a perfect mastery of all circumstances, and a perfect tranquillity resulting from this mastery. To admit the necessity of suicide, therefore, is apparently to deny one or other of their fundamental principles. But we must remember that, with the Stoic, life was not a sacred thing. It fell into the common class of *indifferentia*, and the taking of it, therefore, entailed no crime. On the contrary, that act might be a virtue. With this view, therefore, the Stoic preserved his mastery over circumstances, and maintain-

ed his tranquillity of mind by suicide. To have remained in life would have required him to forfeit these. Sad picture, alas! even though consistent, of the weakness of their system.

We have seen that Stoicism is a system of fatalism; as identifying the Deity with the universe, which in definite periods is absorbed into his essence, it is a form of pantheism; in asserting the underived existence of matter, it exhibits one of the numerous types of materialism; and in referring all doctrines to reason as the ultimate standard, it is a system of rationalism. It has also been called the nearest approach which the pagan mind has made to Christianity. We grant that they have much in common. But a system that allows no forgiveness of enemies; that forbids repentance for wrong; that recognizes no need of redemption, or divine aid in trial; that never rises to the conception of trust in God, or communion with him, much less of rejoicing in tribulation because endured in his service; that seeks in suicide a cowardly relief from the ills of life, which, in their bitterest

form, Christian faith has ofttimes enabled the sufferer heroically and even cheerfully to endure; that is in its inmost essence a system of selfishness; is yet far below the benevolence, the mercy, the loving trust, and comforting hope of the Gospel. Yet it must be confessed that much that is called Christianity would be greatly improved, if it had the firm conviction, the fortitude, the patience, the persistence of Stoicism.

We will conclude with the fitting words of Sir Alexander Grant:

"The spirit of Stoicism, existing by itself, is narrow and harsh; it has too great affinity to pride and egotism; it is too repressive of the spontaneous feelings of art, and poetry, and geniality of life. On the other hand, it is the stimulus to live above the world. Hence while the bare Stoical spirit, in whatever form, produces only an imperfect and repulsive character, a certain leaven of it, to say the least, is necessary, else would a man be wanting in all effort and aspiration of mind." *

*Quoted in Hurst & Whiting's Seneca.

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